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# President Al Gore and the 2003 Iraq War: A Counterfactual Critique of Conventional "W"isdom

Ву

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The decision to attack Iraq in March, 2003 was a product of the political biases, mistaken perceptions, misguided priorities, intentional deceptions and grand strategies of President George W. Bush and prominent 'vulcans' and 'neoconservatives' on his national security team. To fully appreciate the causal path leading to the onset of military hostilities, therefore, we need to understand George W. Bush the person, the powerful and determined neocons and vulcans who advised him, and the package of prejudices, emotions, beliefs and values shared by those responsible for crafting the Bush Doctrine.

The 'Bush-neocon-war' thesis has emerged as *the* dominant narrative for explaining the U.S. attack. It represents the prevailing consensus running through dozens of the most popular books on the Bush administration, and hundreds of frequently cited (and widely circulated) scholarly articles, media reports and blog entries on the invasion.

Notwithstanding its widespread appeal, the 'Bush-necon-war' thesis remains an unsubstantiated assertion, a 'theory' without theoretical content, an argument devoid of logic or perspective. In essence, the most common explanation for the war is based on an historical account that overlooks almost all of the relevant historical facts.

In sum, a widely accepted explanation for one of the most important wars in decades has not yet been subjected to a careful, rigorous evaluation. The objective of the following report is to reveal significant logical, factual and historical errors consistently overlooked by its advocates.

#### RÉSUMÉ

La décision d'attaquer l'Irak prise en mars 2003 était le produit de partis pris politiques, de perceptions erronées, de priorités malavisées, de tromperies intentionnelles et de stratégies grandiloquentes du Président George W. Bush et des éminents « vulcains » et « néoconservateurs » qui siégeaient à son comité de sécurité nationale. Pour apprécier pleinement le cheminement des causes qui ont mené au début des hostilités militaires, il faut donc comprendre la personne de George W. Bush, les néoconservateurs et les vulcains puissants et déterminés qui l'ont conseillé et le paquet de préjugés, d'émotions, de croyances et de valeurs partagés par ceux qui étaient responsables de l'articulation de la doctrine Bush.

La thèse de la « guerre néoconservatrice de Bush » a émergé comme l'exposé dominant servant à expliquer l'attaque menée par les É.-U. Elle représente le consensus prédominant dont le fil court à travers des douzaines des livres les plus populaires sur l'administration Bush et de centaines d'articles érudits fréquemment cités (et largement diffusés), de rapports médiatiques et d'inscriptions de bloques touchant l'invasion.

Malgré son attrait généralisé, la thèse de la « guerre néoconservatrice de Bush » demeure une affirmation non corroborée, une « théorie » sans contenu théorique, un argument vide de logique et de perspective. Essentiellement, l'explication la plus commune de la guerre est basée sur un compte rendu historique qui néglige presque tous les faits historiques pertinents.

En somme, une explication largement acceptée de l'une des guerres les plus importantes de plusieurs décennies n'a pas été soumise à une évaluation soignée et rigoureuse. L'objectif du rapport qui suit est de révéler d'importantes erreurs logiques, factuelles et historiques laissées de côté de façon consistante par ceux qui s'en faisaient les avocats.

#### INTRODUCTION

The decision to attack Iraq in March, 2003 was a product of the political biases, mistaken perceptions, misguided priorities, intentional deceptions and grand strategies of President George W. Bush and prominent 'vulcans' and 'neoconservatives' on his national security team. A few powerful ideologues exploited public fears (and international goodwill) in the aftermath of 9/11 to amplify Iraq's WMD threat as a primary justification for an unnecessary, preventive invasion.¹ Disarming and democratizing Saddam's brutal regime were viewed as moral imperatives and considered essential to America's long term security interests, which explains why the 2002 National Intelligence Estimates on Iraq were updated to exaggerate the scope of Baghdad's WMD-terrorism nexus. To fully appreciate the causal path leading to the onset of military hostilities, therefore, we need to understand George W. Bush the person, the powerful and determined neocons and vulcans who advised him, and the package of prejudices, emotions, beliefs and values shared by those responsible for crafting the Bush Doctrine.²

The 'Bush-neocon-war' thesis, which I will label <u>neoconism</u> for lack of a better descriptor, has emerged as *the* dominant narrative for explaining the U.S. attack.<sup>3</sup> It represents the prevailing consensus running through dozens of the most popular books on the Bush administration, and hundreds of frequently cited (and widely circulated) scholarly articles, media reports and blog entries on the invasion.<sup>4</sup> In fact, casual observers engaged in a cursory review of the literature will find the same thesis repeated (and usually defended) by prominent scholars, journalists and Washington 'insiders' on the left and right of the political spectrum.<sup>5</sup> The perspective is truly global in popularity, and, like many intellectual paradigms, its proponents share several common but fundamentally flawed assumptions about how a few officials in Washington planned and executed their foreign policy strategy.<sup>6</sup>

Notwithstanding its widespread appeal, neoconism remains an unsubstantiated assertion, a 'theory' without theoretical content, an argument devoid of logic or perspective. Neoconism is, in effect, an historical account that overlooks almost all of the relevant historical facts. Consider the implications — a widely accepted explanation for one of the most important wars in decades has not yet been subjected to a careful, rigorous evaluation.

Even the most superficial review of its central tenets reveals serious logical, empirical and theoretical flaws. For instance, neoconism assigns a remarkable measure of power and political influence to George W. Bush and a few of his key advisers. They (and they alone) share most of the responsibility for transforming the direction of American foreign and security policy after 9/11, not to mention the priorities of an entire international community. Proponents of this view remain convinced that a few high ranking officials had the intellectual prowess and political skills to manipulate the preferences, perceptions and priorities of so many other intelligent people, including but not limited to:

1) several influential (non-neocon) foreign and security policy advisers regularly consulted by Bush (Colin Powell, Prime Minister Tony Blair, etc.); 2) a significant majority of both political parties serving on key Congressional foreign policy and intelligence committees in the House and Senate (including every senior Democrat); 3) a majority of elected officials in Congress, almost all of whom offered strong endorsements of the October, 2002 joint resolution authorizing the use of military force); 4) a majority of the American public (between 60%-70% consistently supported Bush's handling of the Iraq crisis from 2002-2003); 5) Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and leaders from every European government excluding France, Germany and Belgium; 6) every member of the UN Security Council (including France, Russia and China) who unanimously endorsed UN Security Council Resolution 1441, a clear summary of the global intelligence consensus on Iraq's "material breach," chemical and biological weapons programs and "nuclear

facilities;" 7) a significant majority of Iraqi citizens who, despite being shot at, voted in the democratic elections at the centre of Bush's neocon-empire-building scheme; and many others.

The details included in this brief historical sketch seldom appear in neoconism's explanatory framework. One would have to assume that a few members of Bush's national security team managed to create the necessary illusions to dupe everyone into spending billions of dollars every year to accommodate this irrational, ideologically motivated package of prejudices. Apparently, all of the decision-makers listed above were (and remain) just too blind or dimwitted to see through the scheme. George W. Bush and his key advisers do not deserve this kind of credit, and everyone else does not deserve that amount of blame.<sup>7</sup>

Among the more obvious problems with neoconism is its astonishing simplicity – the thesis disregards the intellectual legacy left by hundreds of scholars, practitioners and theorists working in the fields of political science, international relations, political psychology, rational choice theory, conflict and war analysis, and U.S. foreign and domestic policy analysis. In essence, the most popular explanation for the Iraq war has no grounding in the knowledge we have compiled over the last several decades on when, how and why powerful democratic states go to war.<sup>8</sup>

The objective of the following report is to refute neoconism by revealing significant logical and historical errors overlooked by its advocates.

## **Logical Fallacies**

The central tenet of neoconism is quite simple – a Bush administration dominated by powerful neoconservatives was a *necessary* condition for the Iraq war. Advocates are not claiming a Bush victory was sufficient for the onset of hostilities three years later, but the conventional wisdom is quite explicit about the crucial role played by neoconservatives pushing for the war; this is without question the foundational principle underpinning the prevailing consensus. If we extract the neocons from this popular story there would be nothing of substance left to distinguish the explanation from dozens of others.

Every necessary condition theory is logically connected to its sufficient condition counterpart – if X (neoconservatism) was a *necessary* condition for outcome Y (a U.S. invasion of Iraq), then the absence of X would have been *sufficient* for the absence of Y, by definition. As Goertz and Levy (2007) observe, "to assert a necessary condition is simultaneously to assert a (sufficient condition) counterfactual: they are bound together." Now, consider the unmistakable counterfactual argument firmly rooted in neoconism – had a few more hanging chads remained intact in Florida in the 2000 election, the Iraq war would never have happened. President Al Gore, for example, would have been guided by his non-neocon foreign policy team predisposed to providing advice based on their distinct experiences, values and ideological biases. A different set of strategic priorities would have emerged to move the Gore administration, the country and international community down an alternative path away from war. In sum, if neoconservative preferences in a Bush administration were indeed a necessary condition for war, then a Gore presidency would have been a sufficient condition for peace.

On the other hand, if there are compelling and historically informed reasons why President Al Gore would have been pressured after 9/11 to make many (I will argue **all**) of the same major decisions on Iraq, this evidence would logically run counter to the standard narrative embedded in neoconism. For example, the stronger the case that Al Gore shared the same conclusions about Iraq's WMD, the weaker the claim that neoconservatism was required to form that perception. Similarly, if Al Gore had faced the same domestic pressure to approach the UN for a strong, multilaterally-endorsed resolution to force Saddam to comply with robust inspections, then, once again, neoconservatism is irrelevant to that small part of the story.

A carefully constructed counterfactual analysis of the major domestic and foreign policy decisions in this case strongly supports the view that President Gore would have been compelled to follow the same path. The evidence is based on a thorough review of: the values, (mis)perceptions and beliefs expressed by Al Gore and every member of his national security team; American societal preferences after 9/11 (including strong public support for a clear resolution to the Iraq crisis); widespread consensus in Congress on Iraq's WMD threat; pervasive intelligence failures (and constraints); and serious miscalculations by Saddam Hussein regarding Washington's resolve and intentions. These factors, derived from multiple levels of analysis, combine to provide a far more credible explanation for Bush's decision to invade, and would have pushed a Gore administration along the same path.

## The Value of Counterfactual Historical Analysis

Counterfactual historical analysis is widely accepted across multiple disciplines as a powerful tool for evaluating popular historical accounts of major events, or for testing social scientific theories to resolve questions about causation. It has been used by prominent scholars to weigh competing explanations for world wars, the end of the Cold War, the escalation of contemporary international crises, and many other transformative events in world history. Counterfactuals, Lebow reminds us, are an essential ingredient of scholarship. They help determine the research questions we deem important and the answers we find to them. They are necessary to evaluate the political, economic, and moral benefits of real-world outcomes. These evaluations in turn help drive future research. Counterfactual analysis, therefore, is not just another option for comparing different interpretations – the approach is fundamental to any serious historical inquiry and facilitates the test of social scientific theories.

Sceptics will immediately reject the notion that counterfactual analysis can be used to refute the dominant 'Bush-neocon-war' thesis. But *every* theory has embedded within it one or more inescapable counterfactual claims – the difference is that some scholars are more honest than others about this fact, and more willing to engage relevant counterfactual evidence when defending their theories. Proponents of neoconism can not dismiss counterfactual reasoning simply because the credibility of their theory depends so heavily on an unsubstantiated counterfactual assertion – i.e., Gore would never have gone to war because, unlike Bush, he would not have been advised or pressured by neoconservatives. If that counterfactual is refuted, however, so is neoconism.

#### **Comparative Counterfactual Analysis**

Traditional approaches to counterfactual analysis typically focus on one counterfactual path at a time. The problem is that every theory encompasses at least two competing, mutually exclusive counterfactual claims. With respect to evaluating neoconism, for example, the conventional view maintains that a Gore administration would not have gone to war, while its mirror-image counterpart asserts that Gore would have followed the same path as Bush. The question is which counterfactual receives the strongest support from the facts derived from a careful review of the relevant historical record?<sup>15</sup>

If the **Gore-war-counterfactual** (*Gore-war*) is more plausible, historically accurate, theoretically grounded, and logically compelling than the **Gore-peace-counterfactual** (*Gore-peace*), then these findings would constitute sufficient grounds to reject neconism. The stronger the evidence supporting the *Gore-war* path, the weaker the evidence that neoconservatism was relevant – Bush (like Gore) went to war for reasons that have little or nothing to do with the idiosyncratic features of the individuals who happen to be in power at the time. Carefully weighing all of the evidence is essential to providing a complete explanation for the war.

As a starting point for the exercise, consider the two counterfactuals in relation to the relevant evidence we should expect to find (see Figure 1).

### Figure 1

# **Neoconism**

| <u>Dependent</u><br><u>Variable</u> | Independent/Causal Variable (Neocon Agenda)                 |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| I<br>r                              | Absent (Gore Admin)   | Present (Bush Admin)  |  |
| a<br>q                              | Α   | В   |  |
| Absent W a r                        | Gore-peace (Expect 100% of Evidence) (confirming neoconism) | (anomalous e.g., no preventive war<br>in North Korea or Iran) |  |
| M<br>o                              | <u>C</u>  | D   |  |
| m Present e n t u m                 | Gore-war (Expect 0% Evidence) (disconfirming neoconism)     | (confirms neoconism)  |  |

Proponents of neoconism have relied exclusively on evidence corresponding to category D – that is, they tend to profile the views of Bush administration officials by citing dozens of their pre-war speeches on Iraq's WMD. Logically, neoconists would expect to find very little evidence corresponding to category C (*Gore-war*), but a substantial amount of evidence falling into category A (*Gore-peace*). Surprisingly, a review of the case history confirms the exact opposite to be true – there is considerably more (and stronger) counterfactual evidence corresponding to C and almost no evidence to support A.

#### **Logical Expectations and Counterfactual Histories**

What specific historical facts would we need to see to support one or the other counterfactual? What behaviour, actions, beliefs, perceptions, speeches or stated policy preferences would we need to identify, and how should we interpret or classify this evidence in light of the logic stipulated in Figure 1? Finally, are there any societal, domestic, governmental or international variables (or theories) that might help us explain why one counterfactual does better than the other?

In an effort to provide a more substantive treatment of the evidence supporting the *Gore-war* counterfactual, the remainder of this report will focus on the following five factors:

- 1. Gore's misperceptions, values and policy preferences:
- 2. Societal pressures and public opinion;
- 3. Domestic politics and political support:
- 4. American intelligence failures and miscalculations;
- 5. Saddam's intelligence failures and miscalculations.

These factors encompass many of the items listed in Table 2.

#### 1. President Gore: (Mis)Perceptions, Values and Policy Preferences

The Bush-neocon-war thesis requires, in part, some proof that key officials in the Bush administration were different from other decision-makers at the time, with distinct perceptions, beliefs and policy preferences. But it is impossible to establish distinction by

focussing exclusively on speeches (or documents) by Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Pearle, Dick Cheney or George W. Bush defending the irrefutable intelligence on Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, or endorsing an activist American foreign policy to democratize the Middle East in order to bolster American security. If identical policy preferences are also expressed in dozens of speeches by Gore, his advisers and many other senior Democrats in power at that time, then there is no theoretically relevant distinction that would explain why Bush, and not Gore, would end up on a path to war. The fewer the idiosyncratic differences, the less relevant neoconservatism is to the story.

With respect to uncovering counterfactual evidence from Gore's past, consider the following collection of statements by Al Gore and senior Democratic advisers on his national security team (cited in Appendix 1). The evidence collected here encompasses only a small fraction of hundreds of similar statements available in the public domain. All of the views convey the same WMD consensus held by Bush administration officials, and many of these sentiments were defended by Democrats long before neocons took office. In fact, *all* of the relevant evidence from Gore's entire political career – his speeches on Iraq, contributions to the 2000 campaign debates on foreign affairs, policy announcements and interviews – supports the *Gore-war* counterfactual. More importantly, none of the material comes close to presenting an image of a leader inclined to follow the alternative *Gore-peace* path. Admittedly, these speeches are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to provide a definitive account of the policies Gore would have followed in 2003, but it is important to acknowledge the complete absence of historical evidence that Gore (and his campaign advisers) disagreed with the neocons' take on the Iraq problem.

By any measure, including conservative Republican standards, Gore was a foreign policy hawk. He consistently opposed efforts to cut defense spending, supported Reagan's decisions to bomb Libya, invade Grenada, aid the Contras in the 80s, and fund the B-1 and B-2 bomber and MX missile programs. Gore, along with Senator Joe Lieberman (his 2000 running mate), strongly endorsed the 1991 Gulf War by opposing a significant majority of other Democrats in the Senate at the time. As Vice President, Al Gore supported national missile defence and military actions in Bosnia (lift-and-strike policy, 1993-1995) and Kosovo (1998). Perhaps most relevant to the counterfactuals in question, Gore consistently adopted the hardest line in the Clinton administration when dealing with Saddam Hussein. President Clinton's decision to abort operation Desert Fox in 1998, for example, did not produce unanimous consent among his advisers – Secretary of State Albright, Defense Secretary Cohen and Vice President Gore all opposed backing down at that time, despite the absence of UN Security Council endorsement. Gore also strongly endorsed American retaliatory strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan in response to the terrorist strike on the USS Cole without first obtaining multilateral support from a UN Security Council resolution.

Gore "repeatedly portrayed himself as a man who has come to believe in vigorous American intervention abroad," David Sanger observed, "a reversal of Democratic philosophy for most of the time since the end of the war in Vietnam." There is nothing about Gore's past that would provide even a hint that he had serious reservations about using military force to address a threat from Saddam Hussein, especially after the trauma of 9/11. Nor does Gore appear to be the type of leader who, if bolstered by strong support from a key ally (e.g., Prime Minister Tony Blair), would capitulate to a French refusal to endorse military action against Iraq if Saddam failed to comply with UNSCR 1441.

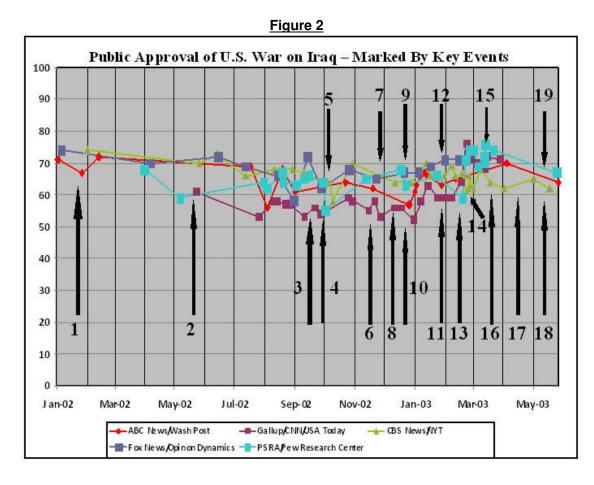
Al Gore's foreign policy advisers during the 2000 campaign shared all of the same views: **Leon Fuerth** (senior Gore adviser and candidate for National Security Advisor); Joseph Lieberman (Vice Presidential candidate); **Madeleine Albright**, **Richard Holbrooke** (a leading candidate for Secretary of State); Sandy Berger, Carl Levin, **John Kerry**, **Joe Biden** (senior Democratic foreign policy advisers); Bill Richardson (U.N. Ambassador under Clinton); Sam Nunn, **Wesley Clark** (both candidates for Secretary of Defence); and Richard

N. Gardner, Robert E. Hunter (often consulted on U.S. foreign policy during the 2000 campaign). Relevant quotes from advisers whose names are highlighted above are included in the second half of Appendix 1. Once again, there is very little evidence from these speeches, statements, editorials or scholarly articles that produces a profile of an administration committed to pursuing an alternative path.

Perhaps the most relevant speeches of all are those delivered by every senior Democratic Senator in October, 2002 justifying their strong endorsement of the resolution authorizing the President to use "all necessary means" to force Saddam's compliance. <sup>19</sup> These same Senators, facing identical domestic pressures under a Gore presidency, would have crafted similar speeches. <sup>20</sup> If we were to place each of these speeches on a continuum similar to the one described in Table 2, all of these statements would fall on the *Gore-war* end of the spectrum (category C). There was only one dominant perspective at the time, and neoconservatism was irrelevant to establishing that standard point of view.

## 2. Societal Pressures and Public Opinion

There are of course many other societal, governmental and international factors that are relevant when evaluating the two counterfactuals. But these 'structural' variables are far more likely to encourage continuity across administrations, because they are less amendable to significant changes over time. The broader the level of analysis, the more 'structured' the variables, the less likely they are to change, and the more likely they are to induce consistent or very patterned behaviour from political leaders. For example, most of the polling on the public's approval of Bush's Iraq strategy from 2002-2003 was consistently above 60 percent (see Figure 2).



Any president pursuing the same UN-endorsed, multilateral strategy to get inspectors back into Iraq would have received a 60-70 percent public approval rating – these numbers are astronomically high for any president. Support actually increased from December 2002 through March 2003, reaching almost 80% in the PSRA/Pew and Gallup/CNN/USA Today polls. There is no reason to believe Al Gore would have been any less likely to understand (and exploit) the positive political benefits from the same UN-based approach to the Iraq crisis.

### 3. Domestic Politics and Political Support

The public's very strong endorsement of the president's multilateral strategy, in turn, explains the political pressure on Congress to follow suit – the House voted 296-133 to authorize the president's use of force, followed by the Senate's 77-23 vote the next day. There were at least four reasons why strong bipartisan support for the war resolution was inevitable, regardless of whether Bush or Gore was president.

First, everyone in Washington at the time understood how important it was to provide the president with the bargaining leverage he needed to deal with the UN Security Council, and then Saddam. A strong, credible threat of unilateral action was viewed at the time as the best hope for managing the disarmament crisis *peacefully*. Had President Gore approached Congress in 2002 for a similar resolution, as Clinton and Gore did in 1998 prior to their military operation against Iraq, there is no logical reason why the resolution would have failed. In fact, support from Democrats would likely have been even stronger.

Second, many of those voting in 2002 would have remembered the public backlash suffered by Democrats in 1991 for voting against what turned out to be a very popular (and successful) military campaign to oust Saddam from Kuwait. Very few Democrats were willing to take the political risks this time, especially after 9/11. Officials were anxious to exploit any opportunity to convey their security credentials, and Democrats were particularly susceptible to criticisms of being weak on defence. The Iraq crisis provided the ideal opportunity, on the eve of the first post-9/11 midterm election, to convey a strong commitment to homeland security and national defence.

Third, the failure to anticipate 9/11, which at the time was viewed by many as the most significant intelligence blunder in decades, revealed the very high political costs of *underestimating* threats – the CIA ignored too many signals and failed to connect a sufficient number of dots. The lessons, which were later confirmed in the 9/11 commission report, encouraged the government, intelligence communities and Congress to err on the side of *overestimating* the Iraqi threat. Had the Democrats in Congress refused to authorize force if necessary, it would have reinforced public perceptions of Democratic weaknesses on the main election issue: security and defence.

Finally, overreacting to the WMD threat was far less risky (in the short term) than under-reacting to a threat everyone acknowledged was real. The political risks of inaction were far greater than the risks of war, as long as the public believed the war was launched in the interest of American (their) security. The fact that George Bush won the 2004 midterm election despite the complete absence of WMD stockpiles in Iraq illustrates the point. In essence, the Republicans were given credit for erring on the side of American security. The support has since declined significantly, but a Democratic administration would have exploited (and benefited from) the same domestic imperatives to prioritise public safety. Gore's record on Iraq does not support the view that he (or his advisers) would have been more willing to accept the high political costs of doing nothing on Iraq after 9/11, nothing to enforce compliance after the passage of UNSC 1441, or nothing after France rejected any and all military options for disarming Iraq in favour of extending inspections indefinitely. This would have been political suicide leading into the 2004 presidential campaign.

## 4. American Intelligence Failures and Miscalculations

Major intelligence errors typically re-emerge from a combination of bureaucratic and organizational pressures to fix the last mistake. As former CIA Director George Tenet explains, "the remedy for one so-called intelligence failure can help set the stage for another." For example, the failure to imagine new and more serious terrorist threats after the Cold War, or, more specifically, to connect Al-Qaeda to flight schools in Florida, set the stage for 9/11. The natural fix for underestimating a prior threat is to err on the side of overestimating the next one. But even the most conservative (minimalist) interpretation of intelligence on Iraq's WMD would lead to the same conclusion: Saddam did not account for a large portion of his chemical and biological weapons program and needed to be disarmed. There was virtually unanimous consensus on this point. The main question framing the entire WMD dilemma was this: why would Saddam spend so much time and effort challenging the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), and then the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), if he had absolutely nothing to hide?

For American and British officials the debate over Iraq's WMD was never about whether the intelligence definitively established the presence or absence of stockpiles of WMD – it was always about which one of the following two arguments was more convincing, based on generally accepted intelligence at the time: (1) Saddam's regime did *not* continue to develop their WMD program during the four year absence of inspectors from 1998-2002, nor did he retain *any* of the weapons listed in Hans Blix's reports to the United Nations; or (2) that Saddam did retain proscribed weapons cited in every UN resolution and report since 1991, and continued in the absence of UN inspectors to use the billions of dollars collected from a corrupt oil-for-food program to develop WMD that threatened the U.S. and its allies. Every member of the UN Security Council (including the war's strongest critics, France and Russia) unanimously endorsed the second interpretation when they passed UNSCR 1441 (November, 2002). No American politician at the time came close to defending the first argument/scenario.

Given the choice, the more credible (plausible) interpretation of accepted intelligence will always be the one exploited by political officials, which explains the bipartisan consensus on Iraq's WMD. It just made more sense in light of the entire record since 1991. Tenet points out that:

To conclude that Saddam was not pursuing WMD in 2002 our analysis would have had to ignore years and years of intelligence that pointed in the direction of active programs and continuing evidence of aggressive attempts on Iraq's part to conceal its activities...In retrospect we got it wrong partly because the truth was so implausible...We had no previous experience with a country that did not possess such weapons but pretended that it did (emphasis added).<sup>22</sup>

Much like the 9/11 error, the main problem before the Iraq war was a "failure of imagination." The possibility that Saddam was actually bluffing (or, as it turned out, intentionally recreating the illusion of his WMD program to deter Iran) was never considered, because it was simply too far-fetched to assume he would be so reckless. Paradoxically, this is usually the most prudent strategy when confronting any opponent ('never underestimate your enemy'), but, in this case, the working assumption regarding Saddam's 'rationality' turned out to be the most serious error.

These mistaken assessments were not fabricated to further some warped neoconservative agenda, they were shared by every senior Democratic Senator at the time (see Appendix 1). In hindsight, the failure to re-interpret Saddam's behaviour was a mistake, but there is no evidence that Al Gore, or any of his advisers, ever contemplated the possibility the intelligence was completely wrong. The WMD consensus would have been exploited by

Gore for the same post-9/11 security maximising reasons: defending the 'obvious' interpretation was the only winnable political strategy. Clinton and Gore did the exact same thing prior to Operation Desert Fox when *they* were responsible for misinterpreting Saddam's intentions and miscalculating the scope of the WMD threat.

## Duelling National Intelligence Estimates

The 2001 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq's WMD was peppered with the following caveats: Iraq "probably continued at least low-level theoretical R&D on nuclear weapons technologies," "Baghdad may be attempting to acquire materials that could aid in reconstructing its nuclear weapons program;" and "We are concerned that Iraq may again be producing biological warfare agents." Many of these qualifiers were deleted in the updated 2002 NIE: Iraq "has chemical and biological warfare agents" and is "reconstituting its nuclear program;" "all key aspects (research & development, production, weaponization) of Iraq's offensive biological weapons program are active and most elements are larger and more advanced than they were before the gulf war." Tenet offers the following defence of the updated 2002 report:

Contrary to popular misconceptions, the NIE also gives full voice to those agencies that wanted to express alternative views. Dissenting opinions are not relegated to footnotes and, indeed, often appear in boxes with special coloured background to make them stand out. These make up an unprecedented 16 pages of the ninety-page NIE.<sup>24</sup>

Tenet readily admits now that the "nuance was lost" in the five page summary of key findings, but he goes on to point out that very few decision-makers actually read the entire 90 page report. The Democrats and Republicans who voted to authorize the use of force had made up their minds long before the publication of a five page summary attached to an updated NIE, the many speeches they delivered in previous years confirm this important point.

Tenet notes that "the judgements (the CIA) delivered in the NIE on Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons program were consistent with the ones we had given to the Clinton administration."<sup>25</sup> He goes on to state:

The absence of evidence and linear thinking, and Iraq's extensive efforts to conceal illicit procurement of proscribed components, told us that a deceptive regime could and would easily surprise us. It was never a question of a known imminent threat; it was about an unwillingness to risk surprise....In many ways we were prisoners of our own history.<sup>26</sup>

The overwhelming consensus, with or without the caveats in the five page NIE summary, was more than sufficient to raise serious security concerns after 9/11. Anyone looking for reasons to be worried about Iraq could easily ignore speeches by Bush, Cheney or Rumsfeld and focus instead on those delivered by Clinton (Bill or Hillary), Gore and Kerry; they could ignore the 2002 NIE and read the NIEs published over the previous five years; or they could simply read the reports by UNMOVIC's chief weapons inspector Hans Blix, or UNSCOM's inspector Scott Ritter (one of the war's strongest critics):

## Bill Clinton (February 17, 1998)

"In 1995, Hussein Kamal, Saddam's son-in-law, and the chief organizer of Irag's weapons of mass destruction program, defected to Jordan. He revealed that Iraq was continuing to conceal weapons and missiles and the capacity to build many more. Then and only then did Iraq admit to developing numbers of weapons in significant quantities and weapon stocks. Previously, it had vehemently denied the very thing it just simply admitted once Saddam Hussein's son-in-law defected to Jordan and told the truth. Now listen to this, what did it admit? It admitted, among other things, an offensive biological warfare capability notably 5,000 gallons of botulinum, which causes botulism; 2,000 gallons of anthrax; 25 biological-filled Scud warheads; and 157 aerial bombs....And I might say UNSCOM inspectors believe that Iraq has actually greatly understated its production....The UNSCOM inspectors believe that Iraq still has stockpiles of chemical and biological munitions, a small force of Scud-type missiles, and the capacity to restart quickly its production program and build many, many more weapons....Iraq must agree and soon, to free, full, unfettered access to these sites anywhere in the country. There can be no dilution or diminishment of the integrity of the inspection system that UNSCOM has put in place....Now, let's imagine the future. What if he fails to comply, and we fail to act, or we take some ambiguous third route which gives him yet more opportunities to develop this program of weapons of mass destruction and continue to press for the release of the sanctions and continue to ignore the solemn commitments that he made?"

### Hans Blix, Chief UN Weapons Inspector (January 27, 2003)

"Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance – not even today – of the disarmament, which was demanded of it and which it needs to carry out to win the confidence of the world and to live in peace."

"The nerve agent VX is one of the most toxic ever developed."

"13,000 chemical bombs were dropped by the Iraqi Air Force between 1983 and 1988, while Iraq has declared that 19,500 bombs were consumed during this period. Thus, there is a discrepancy of 6,500 bombs. The amount of chemical agent in these bombs would be in the order of about 1,000 tonnes."

"The recent inspection find in the private home of a scientist of a box of some 3,000 pages of documents, much of it relating to the laser enrichment of uranium support a concern that has long existed that documents might be distributed to the homes of private individuals....we cannot help but think that the case might not be isolated and that such placements of documents is deliberate to make discovery difficult and to seek to shield documents by placing them in private homes."

"I have mentioned the issue of anthrax to the Council on previous occasions and I come back to it as it is an important one. Iraq has declared that it produced about 8,500 litres of this biological warfare agent, which it states it unilaterally destroyed in the summer of 1991. Iraq has provided little evidence for this production and no convincing evidence for its destruction. There are strong indications that Iraq produced more anthrax than it declared, and that at least some of this was retained after the declared destruction date. It might still exist. Either it should be found and be destroyed under UNMOVIC supervision or else convincing evidence should be produced to show that it was, indeed, destroyed in 1991."

## Scott Ritter (1998 – the year UNSCOM inspectors left Iraq)

"Even today, Iraq is not nearly disarmed. Based on highly credible intelligence, UNSCOM [the U.N. weapons inspectors] suspects that Iraq still has biological agents like anthrax, botulinum toxin, and clostridium perfringens in sufficient quantity to fill several dozen bombs and ballistic missile warheads, as well as the means to continue manufacturing these deadly agents. Iraq probably retains several tons of the highly toxic VX substance, as well as sarin nerve gas and mustard gas. This agent is stored in artillery shells, bombs, and ballistic missile warheads. And Iraq retains significant dual-use industrial infrastructure that can be used to rapidly reconstitute large-scale chemical weapons production."<sup>28</sup>

Intelligence reports by the UK and Germany from 1991 through 1998 reinforced the same suspicions. Even Hans Blix directly contributed to the WMD myth by re-producing 'mixed' reports expressing serious concerns about unaccounted for weapons – he was just as wrong as everyone else. All of these misperceptions were encouraged by Saddam every time he refused admission to a site, or demanded some exception to a UN resolution's mandate, or refused un-monitored interviews with his scientists. Each demand was interpreted as proof he had something to hide.<sup>29</sup>

With all of this in mind, extending inspections by a few more weeks (or even months) could not have resolved the problem. Remember, it took two years for the Iraqi Survey Group (ISG), with the benefit of unfettered access to the entire country, to produce its final report. Obviously the ISG uncovered no evidence of WMD stockpiles, but they did find information and material, intentionally hidden by the regime, that would have constituted material breach if uncovered by UNMOVIC. This would have been the worst possible combination of facts and assumptions: a prevailing WMD consensus, ongoing suspicions reinforced by years of non-compliance, additional evidence of material breach, and a strong UNSC resolution (1441) demanding that Saddam produce evidence could not (or would not) provide.

The crisis constituted an irresolvable security dilemma for any U.S. president, because diplomats on each side of the UN debates were applying different standards for measuring "success." For American and British officials, success meant full and complete compliance. In its absence the only reasonable conclusion was that Saddam was hiding weapons Washington needed to find and destroy. For France and Russia, on the other hand, success was defined by the absence of stockpiles. Unfortunately, the failure to locate stockpiles simply reinforced Washington's belief that UN inspectors were incapable of doing their job – again, the alternative interpretation (i.e., Saddam had nothing) was not plausible. In the context of these irreconcilable differences, France's decision to reject any military option put American and British officials in a very difficult position. For reasons covered in sections 2 and 3 above, the risks of war became more acceptable than the risks of inaction.

## 5. Saddam's Intelligence Failures and Miscalculations

We now know American, British, German and UN (UNSCOM and UNMOVIC) intelligence on Saddam's WMD programs was seriously flawed, but these mistakes account for only half of those made over the last decade. The Iraqi regime, not surprisingly, was also plagued by serious intelligence errors and prone to making strategic miscalculations. The effects of mutually reinforcing misperceptions were described by Tenet:

I did not think he was bluffing, either. With the quality of UN inspections growing weaker over time, the political will to maintain sanctions fading, and Saddam's coffers ballooning through the Oil-for-Food program, I had little doubt in my own mind what Saddam was up to. I believed he had WMD and I said so. From then on, after UNSCOM's departure, we had to rely more on analysis and extrapolation of more nuanced technical data....Yet Saddam

gave us little reason to believe that he had changed his stripes....(He) was a fool for not understanding, especially after 9/11, that the United States was not going to risk underestimating his WMD capabilities as we had done once before....Before the war, we didn't understand he was bluffing, and he didn't understand that we were not.<sup>30</sup>

It is impossible to fully appreciate the causes of the Iraq war without acknowledging the impact of Saddam's mistakes.

FBI agent George Piro interviewed Saddam almost every day after his capture; he was tasked with finding answers to puzzling questions about mythical WMD programs, the regime's ties to Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, and why Saddam risked war with the United States rather than fully comply with UN resolutions and inspections. According to Piro, Saddam acknowledged that "most of the WMD had been destroyed by the U.N. inspectors in the '90s. And those that hadn't been destroyed by the inspectors were unilaterally destroyed by Iraq." Saddam kept this secret in order to project an image of strength "because that was what kept him, in his mind, in power. That capability kept the Iranians away. It kept them from reinvading Iraq." Saddam mistakenly believed Tehran was a bigger threat to his regime than Washington.

Based on extensive interviews with thousands of Iraqi officials, the final report by the Iraqi Survey Group offered the following insights into the regime's working assumptions:<sup>32</sup>

## Deulfer Report (ISG)

Iraq derived much of its understanding of U.S. military capabilities from television and the Internet, according to the former DGMI director. Iraq obtained only limited information about U.S. military capabilities from its own intelligence assets, although they closely monitored the U.S. buildup in Kuwait....Saddam failed to understand the United States, its internal or foreign drivers, or what it saw as its interests in the Gulf region. Little short of the prospect of military action would get Saddam to focus on U.S. policies. He told subordinates many times that following Desert Storm the United States had achieved all it wanted in the Gulf. He had no illusions about U.S. military or technological capabilities, although he believed the United States would not invade Iraq because of exaggerated U.S. fears of casualties. Saddam also had a more pessimistic view of the United States. By late 2002 Saddam had persuaded himself, just as he did in 1991, that the United States would not attack Iraq because it already had achieved its objectives of establishing a military presence in the region, according to detainee interviews. Saddam speculated that the United States would instead seek to avoid casualties and, if Iraq was attacked at all, the campaign would resemble Desert Fox. Some Iraqi leaders did not consider the United States to be a long-term enemy, but many knew little about the United States and less about its foreign policy formulation. Former advisors have also suggested that Saddam never concluded that the United States would attempt to overthrow him with an invasion (page 32).

Iraq's cooperation with UN inspectors was typically uneven, and ultimately the Coalition considered the Regime's efforts to be too little, too late. By January 2003, Saddam believed military action was inevitable. He also felt that Iraqi forces were prepared to hold off the invaders for at least a month, even without WMD, and that they would not penetrate as far as Baghdad. He failed to consult advisors who believed otherwise, and his inner circle reinforced his misperceptions. Consequently, when Operation Iraqi Freedom began, the Iraqi armed forces had no effective military response. Saddam was surprised by the swiftness of Iraq's defeat (page 62).

The more serious blunder was Saddam's miscalculation of U.S. priorities and intentions. According to Piro, "he thought the United States would retaliate with the same type of attack as we did in 1998 under Operation Desert Fox....He survived that once, (so) he was willing to accept that type of attack. That type of damage." When asked whether Saddam was aware of American and British forces being deployed to the region, Tariq Aziz (one of Saddam's closest and most senior advisers) answered, "of course he was aware, it was all over the television screen. He thought they would not fight a ground war because it would be too costly to the Americans. He was overconfident. He was clever, but his calculations were poor. It wasn't that he wasn't receiving the information. It was right there on television, but he didn't understand international relations perfectly."

Critics of the war are right to emphasize American and British foreign policy blunders, intelligence errors and miscalculations, but Saddam's strategic errors are inexorably connected to Washington's working assumptions. If Saddam maintained the illusion of WMD to deter what he perceived as a more serious threat from Iran, and expected France and Russia to prevent the U.S.-UK coalition from fighting without UN endorsement, and assumed Washington would rely on air-strikes alone to avoid casualties from a ground invasion, there is very little a Gore administration could have done from January-March of 2003 (following the passage of UNSC 1441) to alter Saddam's assumptions or improve the quality of his decision-making. In fact, Saddam's misunderstanding of America's resolve to fight a ground war would likely have been reinforced had Saddam been facing a Gore administration — why wouldn't he expect the same strategy used by Clinton-Gore in Operation Desert Fox four years earlier?

## Summary and Implications

Consider the following expanded sample of idiosyncratic, domestic and international factors that might have influenced President Gore during the same crucial period from 2002-2003.

#### Table 1

#### Enabling Conditions Influencing Al Gore Presidency - 2002-2003

- 1. Willingness to use military force (Iraq 1991, 1998; Bosnia 1995; Kosovo 1998);
- 2. Gore hawkish on foreign policy, Iraq and Saddam Hussein;
- 3. Gore advisors & Congress hawkish on Iraq and Saddam threat;
- 4. Foreign policy legacy unilateral application of force (Kosovo 1998);
- 5. Gore exaggerated intelligence to bolster foreign policy (e.g., Kosovo body count);33
- 6. Convinced of Iraq's WMD and seriousness of threat (e.g., 1998 bombing of Iraq);
- 7. Accepts "Axis of Evil" reference to Iraq, Iran and North Korea;<sup>34</sup>
- 8. Supports policy of "regime change" Iraqi Liberation Act, 1998 (Clinton admin.);
- 9. Belief in legal grounds for war based on previous UN Resolutions;
- 10. Expressed strong support for returning inspectors to Irag (absent since 1998);
- 11. Expressed strong preference for robust inspections (consistent with UNSC 1441);
- 12. Accepts relationship between democratization and U.S. security:
- 13. Supported active internationalism, 'assertive multilateralism', 'forward engagement':
- 14. Strong belief in the utility and moral purpose of U.S. military technology;
- 15. Intelligence failures, bureaucratic deficiencies present during Clinton/Gore;
- 16. Public opinion strongly favourable to robust inspections;
- 17. Public opinion favourable to military action to enforce UNSCR 1441;
- 18. Would have obtained coalition support from same key allies (perhaps others);
- 19. U.S. vs. France, Russia and China i.e., similar divisions within UN;
- 20. Serious miscalculations by Saddam; failure to fully comply with UN resolutions.

Admittedly, Al Gore's preferences in each instance are not likely to be black or white, and there will probably be disputes about what the historical facts actually tell us about Gore's personality and presidency. Nevertheless, it is possible to provide at least some estimation of where Gore would fall on a continuum between two extremes across all 20 of these enabling conditions (please see Table 2). Both extremes represent the mutually exclusive counterfactuals from Figure 1.

| Table 2   |                        |                 |   |  |  |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---|--|--|
| Counterfactual Profiles of Al Gore Administration |                        |                 |   |  |  |
|   |                        |                 |   |  |  |
|   | Category 'A'           | (from Figure 1) | Category 'C'  |  |  |
| Gore-peace →→→→ Gore-war                          |                        |                 |   |  |  |
| Enal  | oling                  | (continuum)     |   |  |  |
| Con   | <u>ditions</u>         |                 |   |  |  |
| 1.  | Diplomacy only         | X               | 3   |  |  |
| 2.  | Gore dovish            | X               |   |  |  |
| 3.  |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 4.  |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 5.  |                        | X               | Exaggerated intel.  |  |  |
| 6.  |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 7.  |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 8.  | Rejected regime change | X               |   |  |  |
| 9.  |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 10.   |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 11.   |                        | X               | <u> </u>  |  |  |
| 12.   | •                      | X               |   |  |  |
| 13.   |                        | X               | Preference for prevention   |  |  |
| 14.   | Military force amoral  | X               | , |  |  |
| 15.   |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 16.   |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 17.   |                        | X               | <b>,</b>  |  |  |
| 18.   |                        | X               |   |  |  |
| 19.   |                        | X               | UNSC conflict   |  |  |
| 20.   | Saddam Rational        | X               | Saddam miscalculations  |  |  |

In sum, a comprehensive review of enabling conditions related to Gore's personality, foreign policy preferences and the domestic, political and bureaucratic pressures he would have faced strongly supports the *Gore-war* end of the continuum in each and every case (i.e., category C from Figure 1). *None* of this evidence is consistent with expectations derived from the dominant neoconism (*Gore-peace*) interpretation of history. Indeed, all of the same structural conditions that were present during the Bush administration would have been equally relevant to Gore's strategic and political calculations at the time, e.g., societal pressures and security fears after 9/11, public opinion on Iraq and the UN, domestic political support in Congress based on the same WMD consensus, mistaken national intelligence estimates from the previous administrations, divisions within NATO and the UN Security Council, and, of course, non-compliance by Saddam Hussein.

### President Gore, Momentum and the 2003 Iraq War

Major foreign policy decisions almost never emerge from a simple cost-benefit assessment of available options – big decisions sneak up, unfolding incrementally over time and through stages. In any given crisis leaders make a series of calculated political, diplomatic and military moves encompassing their preferred crisis management strategy. But in order to

bolster their decisions at each stage officials often highlight the problems (risks and costs) of rejected alternatives. This common strategy makes it very difficult later on in a crisis to adopt previously discarded options. For example, a strong case for why Saddam's WMD programs posed a serious threat to the U.S. was essential to obtaining a) public support, b) Congressional authorization to use force, and c) a unanimous UN Security Council Resolution. Having achieved these goals, in part by persuading everyone they were essential for their security, it becomes much harder later on to return to the status quo (endless inspections) without suffering serious political consequences.

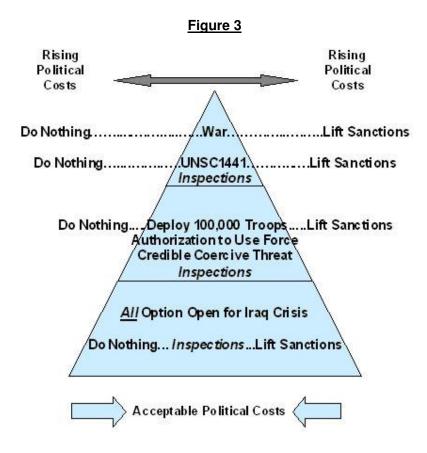


Figure 3 illustrates the rising costs of returning to discarded options.

There is a natural (almost inevitable) 'momentum' tied to selecting one strategy (e.g., returning inspectors, obtaining authorization from Congress, and deploying troops) over another (e.g., ignoring the Iraq problem all together or downplaying the significance of the WMD threat). The stronger the case against Saddam, the harder it is to back off from the military threat stipulated in UNSC 1441 – the political damage from that kind of flip-flop would have been significant after 9/11.

Even Richard Holbrooke (former U.S. Ambassador to the UN under Clinton and a leading contender to become Gore's Secretary of State) was glowing in his endorsement of Bush's strategy:

[The Bush Administration] finally got their act together and....eliminated the united opposition of both parties on the hill and then they went to the UN and played their hand skilfully and as we talk here tonight we're waiting for the next shoe to drop. The most important thing that happened here is that the President speaks finally, the world rallies to the United States, Saddam finally

backs up. Some of the nations of the world then say to the United States, 'ok, don't go any further', Bush correctly says 'no', we're still going to keep pushing and now the ball is back in Washington's court and it's been well played for the last few days. <sup>35</sup>

The Bush team was universally praised at the time for the diplomacy leading to a unanimous UN resolution declaring Saddam in 'material breach' – it was considered by *everyone* to be Colin Powell's shining diplomatic achievement as Secretary of State, and it would have been equally impressive for a Democratic Secretary of State. Once UNSCR 1441 was passed, however, it would have become very difficult (I would argue inconceivable, given Gore's past) for him to back down. The financial costs of sustaining 100,000 American and British troops in the region would have continued to rise as Gore's approval ratings rapidly dropped; the public, encouraged by a strong and vocal Republican opposition, would have questioned the president's commitment to their post-9/11 security. At the time, coalition support from 'new' European states was already on shaky grounds after Chirac raised doubts about the status of their EU membership (following the publication of the Vilnius letter), and many of America's Arab allies, who at the time were providing clandestine support for the coalition (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan), would have backed off in the absence of a clear commitment from Washington to resolve the Saddam problem once and for all.<sup>36</sup>

With respect to French intransigence, Richard Holbrooke, like Colin Powell, interpreted the move this way: "That's the French way. It is the classic play out of the Charles de Gaulle playbook: hold out to the end, get more leverage." Holbrooke would have rejected Chirac's decision to take all military options off the table, because American-British post-9/11 credibility and resolve was at stake.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The material presented in this report constitutes only a fraction of the evidence to support the following conclusion: President Gore would have been compelled to make **all** of the same rational moves to get inspectors back into Iraq. Strategically, the only way to accomplish this goal through multilateral diplomacy would have been to follow the same basic strategy. The competing counterfactual claim that **none** of these decisions would have been taken is simply not credible, nor is it consistent with the historical record. **Gore-peace** constitutes a much weaker counterfactual argument.

The same level of public support (between 60-70 percent) would have convinced senior Democrats to authorize President Gore to use "all means that he determines to be appropriate, including force, in order to enforce the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (regarding Iraq), defend the national security interests of the United States against the threat posed by Iraq, and restore international peace and security in the region." These sensible interim decisions would have been made despite the absence of neocons on Gore's national security team. The only significant difference would have been the size of the invading force - Gore would probably have recommended a much larger troop deployment in line with General Anthony Zinni's plan under the Clinton administration (OP PLAN 1003-98, originally approved in 1996 and updated in 1998, called for 400,000 troops).38 Boosted by the confidence of deploying this many troops, and concerned about the cost of sustaining such a large force through prolonged (and unsuccessful) inspections, Gore would have been more, not less inclined to accept the risks of war. It is highly unlikely that a sitting Democratic President would have survived the 2004 election if he decided against enforcing "all necessary means" or "serious consequences" in favour of the French-Russian position.

Finally, there is nothing much President Gore (or Bush) could have done to prevent the significant strategic miscalculations by the Iragi regime. For whatever reason, Saddam

believed his survival depended on convincing Iranian officials he had WMD – he succeeded. Ironically, his main concern was not that UNMOVIC inspectors would uncover stockpiles, but that they would ultimately conclude he had nothing left.

### Appendix 1

# Speeches/Statement on Iraq by Al Gore and Senior Democratic Foreign Policy Advisers 1991 to 2003

## Al Gore

## 1991 Desert Storm

- \*. (1991) On the issue of removing Saddam's ruling clique: "Unless we do that, we run the risk that the Kurds will still not go back to their homes, and that they will stay in these camps for a long time....That is now a risk that we're running unless we find a way to get Saddam Hussein and his ruling clique there out of power."<sup>39</sup>
- \*. (1991) "In my opinion, Madam President, and I want to state this clearly, President Bush should not be blamed for Saddam Hussein's survival to this point. There was throughout the war a clear consensus that the United States should not include the conquest of Iraq among its objectives. On the contrary, it was universally accepted that our objective was to push Iraq out of Kuwait, and it was further understood that when this was accomplished, combat should stop. That is also why, after it became apparent that Iraqi forces were being routed, pressure mounted rapidly here and abroad to proclaim a cease-fire. If it was a mistake to believe that Saddam Hussein would be a prompt political casualty of the war, as the debacle it turned out to be for Iraq, that his rule would end shortly after the defeat of his armies, then that was a mistake widely shared throughout our country."

## 1998 Desert Fox Bombing Campaign Against Iraq

- \*. (1998) Larry King: "The president pointed out that everyone agreed with this decision: the Security Council, the Joint Chiefs, yourself. Since he did mention you, was that tough for you to say yes to an OK to bomb people?" Gore: "No, it was not, because if you allow someone like Saddam Hussein to get nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, biological weapons, how many people is he going to kill with such weapons? He's already demonstrated a willingness to use these weapons; he poison gassed his own people. He used poison gas and other weapons of mass destruction against his neighbors. This man has no compunctions about killing lots and lots of people. So this is a way to save lives and to save the stability and peace of a region of the world that is important to the peace and security of the entire world."
- \*. (1998) Describing Saddam as a mass murderer: "You know, back in November (1998), when we were on the brink of military action then, Saddam Hussein suddenly waved the white flag and said, 'I give in, I'll do whatever you want.' And we left our forces in the region. We can't leave them there indefinitely. We left our forces in the region and told him, 'OK, look, we'll give you one more chance. If you show a sign that you're not going to cooperate, then we're going to take military action, and there won't be any intervening diplomacy either'....Remember, Peter, this is a man who has used poison gas on his own people and on his neighbors repeatedly. He's trying to get ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons. He could be a mass murderer of the first order of magnitude. We are not going to allow that to happen. We are going to win this confrontation."<sup>42</sup>

# 2000 Election Campaign

- \*. (2000) "We have made it clear that it is our policy to see Saddam Hussein gone....And if entrusted with the presidency, my resolve will never waver."
- \*. (2000) "I was one of only a handful of Senators in the Democratic Caucus in the Senate when Saddam Hussein was in Kuwait. And the argument was made that sanctions would suffice to push him out of Kuwait and get rid of that threat that he was posing virulently to all of the Middle East region. And I voted to authorize the use of force. And it felt like a lonely

vote at the time. And it was tough. But I was glad that I did it. And I think, in retrospect, it definitely turned out to be the right thing."

- \*. (2000) 'Neoconservative' values: "Our greatest national strength comes from what we stand for in the world. It is a great tribute to our founders that 224 years later this nation is now looked to by the peoples on every other continent and the peoples from every part of this earth as a kind of model for what their future could be. Even the ones that sometimes shake their fists at us. As soon as they have a change that allows the people to speak freely, they're wanting to develop some kind of blueprint that will help them be like us more: freedom, free markets, political freedom....The power of example is America's greatest power in the world. And that means, for example, standing up for human rights. It means addressing the problems of injustice and inequity along lines of race and ethnicity here at home because in all these other places around the world where they're having these terrible problems when they feel hope it is often because they see in us a reflection of their potential."
- \*. (2000) 'Neoconservative' values: Gore campaigned in 2000 on a platform of building a "New Security Agenda" arguing that "threats that were once local can have consequences that are regional and global." America should play an active role in "reinvigorated international and regional institutions" toward "confronting threats before they spiral out of control." Gore also favored efforts to resist "new isolationism."
- \*. (2000) 'Neoconservative' values: Gore announces "A New Agenda for the New Decade," his plan to "build a public consensus supporting U.S. global leadership." He argues "our leaders should articulate a *progressive internationalism* based on the new realities of the Information Age: globalization, democracy, American pre-eminence, and the rise of a new array of threats ranging from regional and ethnic conflicts to the spread of missiles and biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. This approach recognizes the need to revamp, while continuing to rely on, *multilateral alliances that advance U.S. values and interests*. A strong, technologically superior defense is the foundation for U.S. global leadership....The U.S. must speed up the 'revolution in military affairs' that uses our technological advantage to project force in many different contingencies involving uncertain and rapidly changing security threats including terrorism and information warfare."<sup>47</sup>
- \*. (2000) "We need to pursue a policy of *'Forward Engagement' addressing problems early* in their development before they become crises; addressing them as close to the source of the problem as possible; and having the forces and resources to deal with those threats as soon after their emergence as possible."<sup>48</sup>
- \*. (2000) On the subject of nation building: "Like it or not, the U.S. is now the natural leader of the world. All these other countries are looking to us. Now, just because we cannot be involved everywhere and shouldn't be doesn't mean that we should shy away from going in anywhere. But there is a difference [with Bush] here. This idea of nation building is kind of a pejorative phrase, but think about the great conflict of the past century, World War II. And acting upon the lesson of WWI, in the aftermath of WWII, we laid down the Marshall Plan; we got intimately involved in building NATO and other structures there. We still have lots of troops in Europe. And what did we do in the late 40's and 50's and 60's? We were nation building."
- \*. (2000) "I want to make it clear: Our military is the strongest, best-trained, best-equipped, best-led fighting force in the world and in the history of the world. Nobody should have any doubt about that, least of all our adversaries or potential adversaries. I will do whatever is necessary in order to make sure our offices stay the strongest in the world. In fact, in my 10-year budget proposal, I have set aside more than twice as much for this purpose as Gov. Bush has in his proposal."<sup>50</sup>

\*. (2000) Saddam Hussein has "been in power for much longer than we would like," but "some of what is now under way, with respect to Iraq, in [the Clinton] administration, is not something we can talk about in the public arena."<sup>51</sup>

### 2002

- \*. (2002) The Bush administration must be "prepared to go [to] the limit" against Saddam in Iraq. "In 1991, I crossed party lines and supported the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but he was allowed to survive his defeat as the result of a calculation we all had reason to deeply regret for the ensuing decade. And we still do. So this time, if we resort to force, we must absolutely get it right. It must be an action set up carefully and on the basis of the most realistic concepts. Failure cannot be an option, which means that we must be prepared to go [to] the limit. And wishful thinking based on best-case scenarios or excessively literal transfers of recent experience to different conditions would be a recipe for disaster." 52
- \*. (2002) "Now, one of the central points I want to make clear today is that we have an obligation to look at the relationship between our war against terrorism and this proposed war against Iraq. We have a goal of regime change in Iraq. We have had for a number of years....Now, here's another of the main points I want to make: If we quickly succeed in a war against the weakened and depleted fourth-rate military of Iraq, and then quickly abandon that nation....then the resulting chaos in the aftermath of a military victory in Iraq could easily pose a far greater danger to the United States than we presently face from Saddam. Here's why I say that. We know that he has stored away secret supplies of biological weapons and chemical weapons throughout his country. As yet, we have no evidence, however, that he has shared any of these weapons with terrorist groups. If the administration has evidence that he has, please present it, because that would change the way we all look at this thing." 53
- \*. (2002) "Even if we give first priority to the destruction of terrorist networks, and even if we succeed, there are still governments that could bring us great harm. And there is a clear case that one of these governments in particular represents a virulent threat in a class by itself: Iraq. As far as I am concerned, a final reckoning with that government should be on the table." 54
- \*. (2002) "Iraq does pose a serious threat to the stability of the Persian Gulf and we should organize an international coalition to eliminate his access to weapons of mass destruction. Iraq's search for weapons of mass destruction has proven impossible to completely deter and we should assume that it will continue for as long as Saddam is in power."<sup>55</sup>
- \*. (2002) "Now, back in 1991, I was one of a handful of Democrats in the United States Senate to vote in favor of the resolution endorsing the Persian Gulf War. And I felt betrayed by the first Bush administration's hasty departure from the battlefield, even as Saddam began to renew his persecution of the Shiites and Kurds, groups that we had after all encouraged to rise up against Saddam....Now, a mere two years later, after we abandoned Afghanistan that first time, Saddam Hussein launched his invasion of Kuwait. And our decision, following a brilliant military campaign, to abandon the effort prematurely to destroy Saddam's military allowed him to remain in power. Now, this needs to be debated and discussed by the Congress. You know, what this tells me is that the Congress should require as part of any resolution that it considers some explicit guarantees on whether or not we're proposing to simply abandon the Iraqi people in the aftermath of a military victory there, or whether or not we're going to demand as a nation that this doctrine of 'wash your hands and walk away' be changed so that we can engage in some nation building again and build the kind of peace for the future that our people have a right to expect."

\*. (2002) "Iraq's search for weapons of mass destruction has proven impossible to completely deter and we should assume that it will continue for as long as Saddam is in power. We know that he has stored secret supplies of biological and chemical weapons throughout his country."<sup>57</sup>

## **Al Gore's National Security Advisers**

## **Leon Fuerth**

- \*. (2000) "With respect to Saddam, both sides have come to the same understanding: As long as he is in power, he is a menace. To be fair, however, Saddam is a legacy bequeathed to the United States by the administration of former President George Bush, which had a sword at Saddam's throat at the end of the Gulf War but elected not to use it. Once there was peace, and once the United States moved into the post-Cold War period, there were many constraints upon America's freedom of action. One must understand these limitations in terms of the attitudes of the other members of the coalition and the attitudes of countries in the region, like Saudi Arabia, upon whose cooperation Washington depends. These things have tended to place some limits on the extent to which the United States might otherwise exercise power."<sup>58</sup>
- \*. (2000) "The United States looks forward to the time when the people of Iraq are free of Saddam, and Baghdad's relations with Washington begin to improve. The United States has continued to maintain the box in which it flies missions and attacks Iraq when Iraq attacks the United States. Washington struggles with some of its best friends to maintain the sanctions, and President Bill Clinton's administration has also begun to work more closely with the Iraqi opposition. Vice President Al Gore wrote to the opposition recently, saying that he looks forward to meeting with them, and his staff is currently working on such a meeting." <sup>59</sup>
- \*. (2000) "With Saddam, the issue will be settled in time with persistence and determination. The Iraqi leader is well hedged in, for his position and power acts as a protection. It would take an unusually cruel assault on Iraq as a whole to dislodge him by use of pure military force. The United States will have to bide its time and work toward circumstances in which Saddam ultimately conspires to bring about his own downfall. Peace is not safe while he is still in power."

### **Madeline Albright**

- \*. (1997) "Consider that Iraq admitted producing chemical and biological warfare agents before the Gulf War that were sufficiently lethal to kill every man, woman and child on earth....Consider that Iraq has yet to provide convincing evidence that it has destroyed all of these weapons....Consider that Iraq admitted loading many of those agents into missile warheads before the war....Consider that Iraq retains more than 7500 nuclear scientists and technicians, as well as technical documents related to the production of nuclear weapons....Consider that Iraq has been caught trying to smuggle in missile guidance instruments....And consider that, according to Ambassador Ekeus, UNSCOM has not been able to account for all the missiles Iraq acquired over the years. In fact, Ekeus believes it is highly likely that Iraq retains an operational SCUD missile force, probably with chemical or biological weapons to go with it....When I was a professor, I taught that you have to consider all possibilities. As Secretary of State, I have to deal in the realm of reality and probability. And the evidence is overwhelming that Saddam Hussein's intentions will never be peaceful."
- \*. (1998) "Iraq is a long way from USA but, what happens there matters a great deal here. For the risks that the leaders of a rogue state will use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons against us or our allies is the greatest security threat we face." 62

- \*. (1998) "As President Clinton affirmed last night, Iraq cannot continue to defy UN Security Council resolutions or to act in contempt of the community of nations. We cannot allow Saddam Hussein once again to brandish weapons of mass destruction and use them to intimidate Iraq's neighbors and threaten the world. Over the next few days, I will be explaining the American position to leaders in the countries I visit, while making it clear that in confronting the clear and present danger posed by Iraqi lawlessness, the diplomatic string is running out."<sup>63</sup>
- \*. (1999) "Hussein has chosen to spend his money on building weapons of mass destruction and palaces for his cronies....There has never been an embargo against food and medicine. It's just that Hussein has just not chosen to spend his money on that. Instead, he has chosen to spend his money on building weapons of mass destruction, and palaces for his cronies."

## Joe Biden

- \*. (2003) "But inspectors have had a hard time getting truthful information from the Iraqis they interview. Saddam Hussein terrorizes his people, including his weapons scientists, so effectively that they are afraid to be interviewed in private, let alone outside the country. They know that even the appearance of cooperation could be a death sentence for themselves or their families."<sup>65</sup>
- \*. (2003) "To overcome this obstacle, and to discover and dismantle Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, UNMOVIC and the IAEA must interview relevant persons securely and with their families protected, even if they protest publicly against this treatment. Hans Blix may dislike running 'a defection agency,' but that could be the only way to obtain truthful information about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction."66

#### **Wesley Clark**

\*. (September 26, 2002) "There's no question that Saddam Hussein is a threat....Yes, he has chemical and biological weapons. He's had those for a long time. But the United States right now is on a very much different defensive posture than we were before September 11th of 2001....He is, as far as we know, actively pursuing nuclear capabilities, though he doesn't have nuclear warheads yet. If he were to acquire nuclear weapons, I think our friends in the region would face greatly increased risks as would we."

#### **Bill Clinton**

- \*. (February, 17, 1998) "We have to defend our future from these predators of the 21st century....And they will be all the more lethal if we allow them to build arsenals of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them. We simply cannot allow that to happen. There is no more clear example of this threat than Saddam Hussein's Iraq. His regime threatens the safety of his people, the stability of his region and the security of all the rest of us." 67
- \*. (1998) "Iraq's actions were a material breach of the Gulf War cease-fire resolution (UNSC Resolution 687), the February 23, 1998, Annan-Aziz Memorandum of Understanding, and Iraq's November 14 commitment to the Security Council. The threat to the region posed by Iraq's refusal to cooperate unconditionally with UNSCOM, and the consequent inability of UNSCOM to carry out the responsibilities the Security Council entrusted to it, could not be tolerated. These circumstances led the United States and the United Kingdom to use military force to degrade Iraq's capacity to threaten its neighbors through the development of WMD and long-range delivery systems. During Desert Fox, key WMD sites and the facilities of the organizations that conceal them, as well as important missile repair facilities and surface-to-air missile sites, were attacked. Operation Desert Fox degraded Saddam's ability to threaten his neighbors militarily."68

## **Hillary Clinton**

- \*. (September 13, 2001) "Every nation has to either be with us, or against us. Those who harbor terrorists, or who finance them, are going to pay a price." 69
- \*. (2002) "In the four years since the inspectors left, intelligence reports show that Saddam Hussein has worked to rebuild his chemical and biological weapons stock, his missile delivery capability, and his nuclear program. He has also given aid, comfort, and sanctuary to terrorists, including al Qaeda members. It is clear, however, that if left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will continue to increase his capacity to wage biological and chemical warfare, and will keep trying to develop nuclear weapons."

## William Cohen (Clinton-Gore Defense Secratary)

\*. (2003) "I am absolutely convinced that there are weapons....I saw evidence back in 1998 when we would see the inspectors being barred from gaining entry into a warehouse for three hours with trucks rolling up and then moving those trucks out."<sup>71</sup>

### **Tom Daschle**

\*. (1998) "Iraq is not the only nation in the world to possess weapons of mass destruction, but it is the only nation with a leader who has used them against his own people."

## John Edwards

\*. (October 10, 2002) "Saddam Hussein's regime represents a grave threat to America and our allies, including our vital ally, Israel. For more than two decades, Saddam Hussein has sought weapons of mass destruction through every available means. We know that he has chemical and biological weapons. He has already used them against his neighbors and his own people, and is trying to build more. We know that he is doing everything he can to build nuclear weapons, and we know that each day he gets closer to achieving that goal."<sup>72</sup>

#### **Richard Holbrooke**

- \*. (November 1999) "Let's be clear about what the UN isn't. The United Nations was never intended to be nor will it ever be some sort of world government. It will never make foreign policy decisions for the United States, nor will it ever lead our troops in combat. It will never replace the institutions or individuals in our country, who in fulfillment of their constitutional obligations to the people make these decisions. The President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, as well as the entire national security team, along with both houses of Congress, make our decisions. They, and they alone, not the UN, determine our national policy."
- \*. (September 17, 2002) "Disorganized and full of disarray the President straightened all that out with a beautifully crafted, beautifully delivered speech a week ago at the UN where he didn't change his positions an inch. Within a week Saddam Hussein blinked, he backed off to the extent of this letter....that's in a week. The United States is now on the right track, whatever your goal, because Saddam has made this gesture. But I certainly agree with Secretary Powell that it's not enough and there needs to be an embodying Security Council resolution as we move forward. I think Saddam Hussein is far away the most dangerous person in leadership in the world today and removing him, which is not related to September 11<sup>th</sup>, is a legitimate goal just as removing Milosevic was a legitimate goal and you and I spent a lot more time in Milosevic than Iraq....The undertaking of a vast military operation on the premise it will be success is always a gamble. Now let me be clear, I believe we will succeed militarily, I think with Saddam's forces at 1/3 of the size they were they were a 12 years ago, our force is stronger, and with much stronger, better precision guided munitions and missiles and high incident of defection among the Iragis, every day now American and British forces are taking down anti aircraft systems in the no fly zone....I don't want to use a word like cake walk, that's too contemptuous to the men and women who risk their lives, but I think the odds heavily favour us in a military conflict. But we can't do it alone, we need the Turks, we

need the British, we need the support of at least one or two Arab states in the region and there is the post period."<sup>74</sup>

# John Kerry

- \*. (2002) "I would disagree with John McCain that it's the actual weapons of mass destruction he may use against us, it's what he may do in another invasion of Kuwait or in a miscalculation about the Kurds or a miscalculation about Iran or particularly Israel. Those are the things that that I think present the greatest danger. He may even miscalculate and slide these weapons off to terrorist groups to invite them to be a surrogate to use them against the United States. It's the miscalculation that poses the greatest threat."<sup>75</sup>
- \*. (2002) "I will be voting to give the President of the United States the authority to use force if necessary to disarm Saddam Hussein because I believe that a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in his hands is a real and grave threat to our security."<sup>76</sup>
- \*. (October 9, 2002) Defending his support for the war powers resolution: "With respect to Saddam Hussein and the threat he presents, we must ask ourselves a simple question: Why? Why is Saddam Hussein pursuing weapons that most nations have agreed to limit or give up? Why is Saddam Hussein guilty of breaking his own cease-fire agreement with the international community? Why is Saddam Hussein attempting to develop nuclear weapons when most nations don't even try, and responsible nations that have them attempt to limit their potential for disaster? Why did Saddam Hussein threaten and provoke? Why does he develop missiles that exceed allowable limits? Why did Saddam Hussein lie and deceive the inspection teams previously? Why did Saddam Hussein not account for all of the weapons of mass destruction which UNSCOM identified? Why is he seeking to develop unmanned airborne vehicles for delivery of biological agents?"
- \*. (2003) "Without question, we need to disarm Saddam Hussein. He is a brutal, murderous dictator, leading an oppressive regime He presents a particularly grievous threat because he is so consistently prone to miscalculation....And now he is miscalculating America's response to his continued deceit and his consistent grasp for weapons of mass destruction. So the threat of Saddam Hussein with weapons of mass destruction is real...."

## <u>Letters to President Bush from Senior Democratic Senators</u>

- \*. (2001) "This December will mark three years since United Nations inspectors last visited Iraq. There is no doubt that since that time, Saddam Hussein has reinvigorated his weapons programs. Reports indicate that biological, chemical and nuclear programs continue apace and may be back to pre-Gulf War status. In addition, Saddam continues to refine delivery systems and is doubtless using the cover of a licit missile program to develop longer-range missiles that will threaten the United States and our allies."<sup>78</sup>
- \*. (2001) "Dear Mr. President: The events of September 11 have highlighted the vulnerability of the United States to determined terrorists. As we work to clean up Afghanistan and destroy al Qaeda, it is imperative that we plan to eliminate the threat from Iraq. This December will mark three years since United Nations inspectors last visited Iraq. There is no doubt that since that time, Saddam Hussein has reinvigorated his weapons programs. The threat from Iraq is real, and it cannot be permanently contained. For as long as Saddam Hussein is in power in Baghdad, he will seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. We have no doubt that these deadly weapons are intended for use against the United States and its allies. Consequently, we believe we must directly confront Saddam, sooner rather than later. Mr. President, all indications are that in the interest of our own national security, Saddam Hussein must be removed from power."<sup>79</sup>

\*. (2002) "Whereas Iraq has consistently breached its cease-fire agreement between Iraq and the United States, entered into on March 3, 1991, by failing to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction program, and refusing to permit monitoring and verification by United Nations inspections; Whereas Iraq has developed weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological capabilities, and has made positive progress toward developing nuclear weapons capabilities."<sup>80</sup>

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# <u>Appendix 2</u> Selected Dates from Public Opinion Polling – Figure 2

- 1. Jan. 29, 2002 In Pres. George W. Bush's State of the Union speech, he identifies Iraq, along with Iran and North Korea, as an "axis of evil."
- 2. May 14, 2002 The UN Security Council revamps the 11-year-old sanctions against Irag.
- 3. Sept. 12, 2002 President Bush addresses the opening of the UN General Assembly, challenging the body to confront the "grave and gathering danger" of Iraq or become irrelevant.
- 4. Sept. 17, 2002 President Bush releases his administration's National Security Strategy, outlining a more militarized policy relying on first strikes.
- 5. Oct. 10, 2002 Congress adopts a joint resolution authorizing use of force against lraq and gives the president authority to take preventive, unilateral military action against lraq, when and how he deems necessary.
- 6. Nov. 8, 2002 The UN Security Council unanimously approves Resolution 1441, imposing tough new arms inspections on Iraq and precise, unambiguous definitions of what constitutes a "material breach." Should Iraq violate the resolution, it faces "serious consequences," which the Security Council would determine.
- 7. Nov. 27, 2002 Weapons inspections resume in Iraq under supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency and UN experts.
- 8. Dec. 7, 2002 Iraq submits a 12,000-page declaration on its chemical, biological, and nuclear activities, claiming it has no banned weapons.
- 9. Dec. 21, 2002 President Bush approves the deployment of U.S. troops to the Gulf region. It is estimated that by March, 200,000 troops will be stationed there. British and Australian troops will join them in the coming months.
- 10. Jan. 27, 2003 The UN Weapons Inspectors' formal report on Iraq is critical, though not damning. Chief UN Weapons Inspector Hans Blix states, "Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament that was demanded of it."
- 11. Jan. 28, 2003 In his state of the union address, President Bush states Saddam Hussein "is not disarming. To the contrary, he is deceiving." He goes on to claim that the Iraqi leader "has shown utter contempt for the United Nations and the opinion of the world." He announces he is ready to attack Iraq, even without a UN mandate.
- 12. Feb. 14, 2003 In a report to the UN, Hans Blix indicates progress has been made in Iraq's cooperation. Both pro-war and anti-war nations feel the report supports their point of view.
- 13. Feb. 24, 2003 The United States, Great Britain, and Spain submit a proposed resolution to the UN Security Council stating, "Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity afforded to it in Resolution 1441." The resolution concludes it is time to authorize use of military force. France, Germany, and Russia submit an informal counter-resolution, stating that inspections should be intensified and extended to ensure there is "a real chance for the peaceful settlement of this crisis" and that "the military option should only be a last resort."

- 14. March 17, 2003 Great Britain's ambassador to the UN says the diplomatic process on Iraq has ended. Arms inspectors evacuate. Pres. George W. Bush gives Saddam Hussein and his sons 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war.
- 15. March 19, 2003 Invasion of Iraq begins when the United States launches Operation Iraqi Freedom. Called a "decapitation attack," the initial air strike of the war targets Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders in Baghdad, with unclear results.
- 16. April 9, 2003 The fall of Baghdad: U.S. forces advance into central Baghdad. In following days, Kurdish fighters and U.S. forces take control of the northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul. There is widespread looting in the capital and other cities.
- 17. May 1, 2003 The United States declares an end to major combat operations.
- 18. May 12, 2003 A new civil administrator takes over in Iraq. Paul Bremer, a diplomat and former head of the counter-terrorism department at the U.S. State Department, replaces Jay Garner, who was seen as ineffective in stemming the continuing lawlessness and violence in Iraq.

#### **ENDNOTES**

- For an excellent treatment of the distinction between pre-emptive and preventive war in the context of democratic states, see Jack S. Levy, "Preventive War and Democratic Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 52 (2008): 1–24.
- For a discussion of the role played by 'vulcans' and 'neoconservatives' on Bush's national security team, see James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin, 2007). See also Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- There is a risk when using the concept "neoconism" to describe the central argument that some combination of George W. Bush and guidance from his neocon advisers constituted a necessary condition for war. Readers are therefore cautioned not to equate neoconism with "neocons." One's beliefs about neoconservativism should not be confused with the more specific causal argument I am making about the war.
- Prominent examples include Francis Fukuyama, America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Michael Isikoff and David Corn, Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War (New York: Random House, 2006); Jacob Weisberg, The Bush Tragedy (New York: Random House, 2008); Jacob Heilbrunn, They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons (New York: Doubleday, 2008); Thomas E. Ricks, Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq (New York: Penguin, 2007): Fred Kaplan Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power (New York: John Wiley and Sons. 2008); Mark Buckley and Robert Singh (ed), The Bush Doctrine and the War on Terrorism: Global Reactions, Global Consequences (New York: Routledge, 2006); Roger Burbach and Jim Tarbell, Imperial Overstretch: George W. Bush and the Hubris of Empire (London: Zed Books, 2004); Homer Duncan Bush and Cheney's War: A War Without Justification (London: Trafford Publishing, 2006); Craig Eisendrath and Melvin A. Goodman Bush League Diplomacy: How the Neoconservatives Are Putting the World at Risk (New York: Prometheus Books, 2004); John Prados Hoodwinked: How George Bush Sold Us A War (New York: New Press, 2004); James Risen. State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration (New York: Free Press, 2006); Samuel Belsham Moki Bush and Gulf War II: A Study in Presidential Leadership (MD: Publish America, 2006); Robert Draper, Dead Certain: The Presidency of George W. Bush (New York: Free Press, 2007); Glenn Greenwald, Tragic Legacy: How a Good vs. Evil Mentality Destroyed the Bush Presidency (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008); Thomas Oliphant, Utter Incompetents: Ego and Ideology in the Age of Bush (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2007); Grant F. Smith, Deadly Dogma: How Neoconservatives Broke the Law to Deceive America (New York: Institute for Research, 2006); Stephen J. Sniegoski, The Transparent Cabal: The Neoconservative Agenda, War in the Middle East, and the National Interest of Israel (Norfolk: Ihs Press, 2008); Craig Unger, American Armageddon: How the Delusions of the Neoconservatives and the Christian Right Triggered the Descent of America (New York: Scribner, 2008); Craig Unger The Fall of the House of Bush: The Untold Story of How a Band of True Believers Seized the Executive Branch. Started the Iraq War, and Still Imperils America's Future (New York: Scribner, 2007).
- The global popularity of neoconism was demonstrated most clearly by the success of Oliver Stone's movie "W" and Michael Moore's documentary (characterized by critics as a mockumentary) "Farenheit 9/11." The fact that Moore's award winning film broke attendance and global video sales records illustrates the tremendous popularity and international appeal of the 'Bush-neocon-war' thesis. Advocates of the thesis encompass liberals, conservatives, Republicans, Democrats, realists, liberal internationalists, socialists, globalists, constructivists, feminists, Muslims, Christians and many others.
- There is some variation in the literature regarding the administration's underlying motivations, but these different goals (e.g., control over oil, democratization of the Middle East, Iraq's WMD threat) are typically filtered through a framework of analysis highlighting the role neoconservatism.

- Krauthammer sarcastically refers to "neocon sorcerers who magically foisted it upon what must have been a hypnotized president and vice president." See Charles Krauthammer, "The Realist Who Got it Wrong," *Washington Post*, Sunday, 30 October 2005, B07.
- For example, when explaining the onset and escalation of war, leaders are assumed to matter more than anything else. Other potentially relevant variables, including public opinion and societal pressure after 9/11, domestic political opportunities and constraints (e.g., Congressional support), bureaucratic pressures and intelligence failures, international politics (e.g., alliances, UN Security Council debates, divisions across Europe) are excluded from the account of U.S. actions. If these structural factors are relevant, however, then neoconservatism carries much less explanatory weight. In fact, most of the theoretical literature on war emphasizes structural, domestic political and bureaucratic factors, with much less attention to leaders.
- Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy, "Causal Explanation, Necessary Conditions, and Case Studies," in Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy, eds., Explaining War and Peace: Case Studies and Necessary Condition Counterfactuals (New York: Routledge, 2007), 9-45.
- Philip Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological and Psychological Perspectives* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).
- 11 See Jack Levy, "Counterfactuals and Case Studies", in Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Henry Brady, and David Collier, eds., Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 627-644; Philip Tetlock and A. Belkin (eds.), Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Richard Ned. Lebow, "What's so Different about a Counterfactual?" World Politics, vol. 52 (2000): 550-585; Philip Tetlock and Richard Ned Lebow, "Poking Counterfactual Holes in Covering Laws: Cognitive Styles and Historical Reasoning," American Political Science Review, vol. 95(4), (2001): 829-843. For case study applications, see Edmund Levin, "Did Reagan End the Cold War?" Weekly Standard (11-15-2004); David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," World Politics, vol. 49 (1996): 56-91; Charles Ragin and Howard Becker, eds., What is a Case? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Gary King and Langche Zeng, "When Can History be Our Guide? The Pitfalls of Counterfactual Inference," 2005 (http://GKing.Harvard.Edu); James Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics* 43(2), (1991):169–195; Philip E. Tetlock, "Theory-Driven Reasoning About Plausible Pasts and Probable Futures in World Politics: Are We Prisoners of Our Preconceptions." American Journal of Political Science, vol. 43(2) (1999): 335-366; Stuart Thorson and Donald A. Sylvan, "Counterfactuals and the Cuban Missile Crisis," International Studies Quarterly, vol. 26 (4), (1982): 539-571; David K. Lewis, Counterfactuals (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); George G.S. Murphy, "On Counterfactual Propositions," History and Theory, vol. 9 (1969): 14-38; Gary King and Langche Zeng, "Improving Forecasts of State Failure." World Politics, vol. 53 (4), (2002): 623-658 (http://gking.harvard.edu/files/abs/civil-abs.shtml); Gary King and Langche Zeng, "The Dangers of Extreme Counterfactuals" Political Analysis, vol. 14 (2), (2006): 131-159 (http://gking.harvard.edu/files/abs/counterft-abs.shtml).
- <sup>12</sup> Lebow (2000), 558.
- "If we hypothesize that x caused y," Lebow (2000: 561) explains, "we assume that y would not have happened in the absence of x centris paribus." For excellent overviews of counterfactual analysis and necessary condition reasoning see Levy (2008) and Gary Goertz and Harvey Starr, Necessary Conditions: Theory, Methodology and Applications (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2003), 54-55: "The correlation universe is occupied by those who focus on hypotheses about classes of events (wars), while those who have proposed necessary condition versions of causation tend to examine cause in the context of a single event....As one moves from qualitative to quantitative analysis, the focus moves from the causes of effects to the effects of causes."
- Lebow (2000: 551, 556): "The difference between so-called factual and counterfactual arguments is greatly exaggerated; it is one of degree, not of kind....Counterfactuals are frequently smuggled into factual narratives."
- Contemplating a Gore presidency requires that we accept a very small change in history (a few more hanging chads), so the case is arguably a nearly perfect minimal rewrite

counterfactual – almost everything else remains the same. As such, a comparative counterfactual methodology that evaluates both mirror image counterfactuals simultaneously is considerably more important.

For a considerably larger collection of relevant quotes, please see:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i87cZ3Og6ts

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSwSDvgw5Uc

http://www.ontheissues.org/al\_gore.htm

http://www.davidstuff.com/political/wmdquotes.htm

- "Fuerth In Line," *The New Republic*, 7 December 1998, 16.
  - David Sanger, *New York Times*, 30 October 2000. Sanger was a senior NYT correspondent covering Gore's debate performances, interviews and foreign policy speeches during the 2000 campaign.
- http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r107:7:./temp/~r1074CpWxF::.
- http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/guery/D?r107:7:./temp/~r1074CpWxF::.
- George Tenet, At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA (New York, 2007), 332.
- lbid., 331.
- "Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions," 1 January through 30 June 2001; released January 2002 (<a href="www.cia.gov/cia/reports/721">www.cia.gov/cia/reports/721</a> reports/jan jun2001.htm#4). According to Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, "with respect to chemical weapons, the Defence Intelligence Agency concluded even as late as September 2002 that 'there is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has or will establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities." Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, \*America Un-bound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2003).
- Tenet (2007), 327. As Daalder and Lindsay (2003: 156) point out, "these footnotes, of course, were not technical asides. They represented fundamental judgements, by the most qualified people, about the nature of the threat facing the nation and thus about whether war, especially preventive war, would be a justifiable response."
- <sup>25</sup> Tenet (2007), 330.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 329-330.
- These quotes are from the Hans Blix Report to the UN Security Council, January 27, 2003 (http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusnewsiraq.asp?NewsID=354&sID=6).
- UNSCOM Chief Weapons Inspector, Scott Ritter, 1998.
- Jervis (2006) provides one of the strongest arguments for why the intelligence failures were largely the result of cognitive biases that affected everyone. The imperative to avoid making the same mistakes you made last time (prior to 9/11) was powerful. For an excellent discussion of cognitive biases regarding Iraq's WMD, see Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failure: The Case of Iraq," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.29, No.1 (February 2006): 3-52.
- <sup>30</sup> Tenet (2007), 331-333.
- "Interrogator Shares Saddam's Confessions," 60 Minutes Online, 24 January 2008 (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/01/24/60minutes/main3749494.shtml).
- Charles Deulfer, Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence On Iraq's WMD, 30 September 2004 (<a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq\_wmd\_2004/index.html">https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq\_wmd\_2004/index.html</a>).
- Lawrence Martin, "Kosovo: Another case of mass deception?" *Globe and Mail*, Thursday, 2 September 2004, A17. Martin was one of the few journalists at the time to draw out the obvious parallels between the Clinton-Gore push to create the illusion of mass graves to justify the bombing campaign, and the WMD illusion to justify the 2003 Iraq war: "In Iraq, it's the missing mass weapons of destruction. In Kosovo, it's the missing mass graves. In alleged ethnic cleansing exercises by Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, as many as 100,000 to 200,000 civilians were said to have gone missing or been killed in Kosovo, many of them buried in mass graves. Members of a Canadian forensic team to the Serbian province have

come forward to label the numbers nonsense. No mass graves, they say, and, on both the Albanian and Serb sides, only a few thousand dead. A mockery of the numbers used to justify the war." Apparently, neoconservatism is not a requirement for exaggerating intelligence.

- In his 17 February 1998 address to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Clinton stated: "This is not a time free from peril, especially as a result of reckless acts of outlaw nations and an *unholy axis* of terrorists, drug traffickers and organized international criminals." Senator John Edwards, when asked about "Axis of Evil" stated: "I mean, we have three different countries that, while they all present serious problems for the United States they're dictatorships, they're involved in the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction you know, the most imminent, clear and present threat to our country is not the same from those three countries. I think Iraq is the most serious and imminent threat to our country." Senator John Edwards during an interview on CNN's "Late Edition," 24 February 2002 (<a href="http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0202/24/le.00.html">http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0202/24/le.00.html</a>). Al Gore also accepted Bush's axis of evil reference and defended the "rogue" status of these three states.
- Richard Holbrooke, "The Charlie Rose Show," 17 September 2002.
- For an overview of the support offered by many Arab states in the region (and other 'critics' of the war), see Frank P. Harvey, *Globalized Terrorism and the Illusion of Multilateral Security* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).
- Julia Preston, "Threats and Responses: Shift Toward the U.S. Stand On Iraq is Noted in Council," *New York Times*, 1 November 2002.
- Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack: The Definitive Account of the Decision to Invade Iraq* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2004).
- <sup>39</sup> ABC, "Nightline," 18 April 1991.
- Congressional Record, 18 April 1991.
- <sup>41</sup> CNN, "Larry King Live," 16 December 1998.
- ABC News, "Special Report," 16 December 1998.
- Vice-President Al Gore, 23 May 2000 (<a href="http://www.sftt.org/dw09252002.html#7">http://www.sftt.org/dw09252002.html#7</a>). See also Sandra Sobieraj, Associated Press in L.A. Times, 23 May 2000.
- Democratic Presidential Debate, University Of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire 5 January 2000 (http://www.issues2000.org/Celeb/Al Gore Defense.htm).
- Presidential Debate, Wake Forest University, 11 October 11 (http://www.ontheissues.org/Wake Forest debate.htm).
- Press Release on Vice Presidential Speech, Boston, 30 April 2000.
- The Hyde Park Declaration, 1 August 2000 (<a href="https://www.ontheissues.org/Notebook/Note\_00-DLC12.htm">https://www.ontheissues.org/Notebook/Note\_00-DLC12.htm</a>). What is so surprising is the absence of any difference between these policy prescriptions and those statements pegged with the 'neoconservative' title when delivered by Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz of Cheney. They were consistent with the proposals expressed in Quadrennial Defense Reviews and other strategic documents produced during the Bush administration. The goals of "promoting the spread of political and economic freedom," and pans regarding "where and how we are willing to use force" are virtually indistinguishable from Bush policies.
- Press Release on Vice Presidential Speech, Boston, 30 April 2000 (http://www.issues2000.org/Celeb/Al Gore Defense.htm).
- Presidential Debate, Wake Forest University, 11 October 2000 (http://www.ontheissues.org/Wake Forest debate.htm).
- 50 Presidential debate, Boston MA, 3 October 2000.
- <sup>51</sup> CNN, "Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer," 30 April 2000.
- Al Gore, Remarks to the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., 12 February 2002.
- Al Gore, Remarks to the Commonwealth Club Of California, San Francisco, CA, 23 September 2002.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>56</sup> Al Gore, Remarks, 2002.
- lbid. See <u>also http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-09-23-gore-text\_x.htm;</u> and <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,12271,797999,00.html">http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,12271,797999,00.html</a>.
- Leon Fuerth and Robert Zoellick, "The Middle East in U.S. Global Strategy," Featuring Comments made to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Annual Symposium, 2000 (http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/print.php?template=C07&CID=177).
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
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  - (http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/irag/1997/bmd970327b.htm).
- Remarks following State of the Union Address, Washington, D.C., 28 January 1998 (<a href="http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/29/iraq.albright/">http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9801/29/iraq.albright/</a>).
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- President Clinton Speech to the Joint Chiefs and Pentagon Staff, 17 February 1998. Present were General Zinni, Secretary Albright, DCIA George Tenet, NSA Sandy Berger. The President was introduced by VP Gore.
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- Richard C. Holbrooke, "A New Realism for a New Era: The U.S. and the UN in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," United States Representative to the United Nations Address to the National Press Club, 2 November 1999.
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